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Part 1: A New Life?

Hello, and welcome to Hate, or Love?!! Before you begin reading, I have some stuff to say about this:

This is going to be a 5-part story. That's self-explanatory....

This is the *SEQUEL* to "Me, or Her?"! Meaning, I *HIGHLY RECOMMEND YOU TO READ THAT 5-PART STORY FIRST, AS THIS TAKES PLACE ALMOST DIRECTLY AFTER WHERE THE PREVIOUS STORY ENDED!!!!* Please help me keep my sanity and read the short stories in order, and also save yourself confusion. Please ;-;

Lastly, I'm going to give you the description of the main character (it's in 1st person POV, so... yeah.)

***Cedarfrost* - white she-cat with a black underbelly and black tail-tip, dark green eyes**

Alright you can read now. There's more Author's Note after the story part. Enjoy! :3

~*~*~*~*~*~

I slow down to a walk, breathing heavily from the long run. My heart is beating quickly and feels alive.

But I know that it is broken.

Hawkstrike is his name. I loved him, and he loved me - or so I thought. I swear we were the perfect couple. We could have raised the best kits the Clan has ever known! But that all changed when he so suddenly chose to be mates with *Rosebreeze,* a no-good she-cat who doesn't deserve that kind of care from any tom, *especially* Hawkstrike.

I now walk through the forest under the night sky, the crescent moon appearing every now and then through the leaves above. A

mass of scents wash over me, and I now know that I have left ForestClan territory - forever.

My heart aches for him so much. But after he practically threatened me to leave ForestClan, I... I don't know what to feel. A cat who you love so dearly, but then forces you out of their *life?* It's almost too hard to bear.

All my life I've been just waiting to find the perfect tom within the Clan, and what happens? Another worthless she-cat rips him right from me. I feel a deep feeling inside of me, a feeling of - no, it can't be - envy? I don't recall ever feeling envious of anyone in my life. If anything, *they're* the ones being envious of me. But to get this feeling specifically because of Rosebreeze?

If only Hawkstrike didn't get in my way when I made an attempt on Rosebreeze's life right before he acted as Clan leader and exiled me himself.

Yes, I know that I could have stayed, because he gave the *generous* choice of me either leaving the Clan or staying but risking my life if I do anything to them.

But now what do I do? I'm alone now, with nowhere to go, no purpose in my life now that I'm gone from the Clan....

I give out a loud, irritated sigh. Deciding that I should just get some sleep, I manage to find a small dip in the ground between to roots of a tree and curl up in that, closing my eyes and struggling to fall asleep.

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I hear something very faint in my sleep, and it keeps growing louder. Rapidly louder.

"Will you be quiet?" I mutter subconsciously. "I'm trying to -"

I instantly wake up, take one glance in the direction of the noise, and sprint the other way. It wasn't long before the dog caught up only several fox-lengths away from me. My sleepiness immediately brushes off of me as I race through the forest, dodging tree trunks
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and bushes like there's no tomorrow. I can faintly feel the dog's hot, gross breath on my tail-tip and yank my tail between my hind legs so the dog can't close its huge jaws on it, and then I would be done for.

I do not know how long I've been running, but it seems like forever. But now I see my chance of escape: up ahead was an oak tree with branches low enough to climb up with ease and then reaches upward to be out of safe reach from the dog. If I -

"Hey, up here!"

In the same oak tree I am aiming for, the voice of a tom calls down to me. Too late to do anything else, the tree is upon me and I jump onto a low branch, scramble to the higher branches above, and crouch, trying to get out of the dog's view. As the stupid creature barks and paces endlessly at the bottom of the tree, the tom jumps down from the branch above to crouch beside me. I'm glad we both have the sense to be quiet until the dog leaves.

Before long, another, higher-pitched call sounds from the direction the dog came from. A Twoleg comes into my view and goes up to the dog, grabbing at its neck and dragging it away. The dog gives a few whimpers of protest and resists its Twoleg, but then eventually gives in and quietly follows the Twoleg back the way they came from. Once I am sure both mouse-brains are gone for good, I begin to climb back to the ground.

But then the tom causes me to pause.

"You're welcome for saving your life."

I turn around and look at him properly for the first time. He is tall but narrow and has black fur with a small tuft of white on his chest, and with yellow eyes which hold a slight amusement from his sarcastic saying. Around his neck, he also wore something similar to what the dog had on - collar, I think they call it? - which was blue and a bit torn up. But I didn't pay much attention to the collar; the only thing that it symbolized was *kittypet*.

"I was already planning to climb up this tree, mouse-heart," I growl

in response. Turning back around to climb down, I add, "There is no reason for me to thank you." I eventually get to the ground and begin to walk in the opposite direction the dog and Twoleg went.

But of course that annoying tom doesn't leave me.

"At least thank me for trying to save you," he meows when he drops down from a low branch.

I stop in my tracks and turn around toward him again and send him a glare. "Look," I growl maliciously, "I've been living in this forest my entire life and know how to keep myself alive. Why don't you just go back to your Twolegs and enjoy your softer, boring life locked in that nest, kittypet?"

I expect him to be taken aback, but instead it seems that his amusement only *grows*.

"I would do that, wildcat, but my *Twolegs* have unfortunately left me completely. I'm on my own now."

Smart fox-heart. I can see why his Twolegs left him. "Well, I'm on my own, too, and would like to stay that way. Now leave me alone." I turn around once again continue on, my tail slightly lashing.

"Maybe we'll see each other again someday?" the kittypet calls one last time. I can hear the mischief coming out of him.

"If we do, I'll might kill you if you don't shut up," I mutter under my breath, not bothering to look back at him. I feel the great relief flooding into me when he doesn't follow.

Thank StarClan. Even though I haven't met many kittypets in my life, I've heard plenty about their obnoxious selves.

I hate them.

I travel through the woods for a bit longer until my stomach growls. Fox-dung! I forgot all about eating after my rude awakening and the following. I glance up at the sky between the overhanging leaves and see the sun up above. About sunhigh.

I stop walking and reach out with my senses to discern any movement in the area around me that gave away my prey's position. Eventually, I find the scent of a mouse. I creep towards the smell, and, peeking around a tree trunk, see a small brown creature sniffing for berries by a bush. I crouch where I am and wait until the mouse finds a berry it's satisfied with and begins to nibble. I bunch my muscles, wiggle my hindquarters, and pounce at it.

And then it was as if my mind stutters and goes from the focus of hunting to the memory that I was going to go hunting with Hawkstrike last night. And the memory of what *she* did.

When my mind clears, I find that I am staring down at my paws - empty, with a half-eaten berry next to them.

"Since you've been living in this forest your entire life, I'd expect you to hunt well."

I snap my head up and see that stupid tom standing a few tail-lengths away from me, and with my mouse dead at his paws. "Everyone messes up every now and then," I hiss. "I told you to leave me alone! Have you been *following* me?"

He shrugs. "I guess when I started walking in the general direction you went I randomly found you again."

"And come right on time when I miss the mouse?" I growl softly, rolling my eyes. "Yeah, sure."

The tom looks away from me and shuffles his paws. Is he embarrassed? Good. "Okay, maybe I was sort of following you... But I wanted to ask you something."

"And that is?" I meow irritatingly.

His - expectant? - yellow eyes zip to mine. "May I travel with you?"

My initial response is to stare at him disbelievingly. My second response is to yowl at him, "Are you kidding me? I literally just said only moments ago to leave me alone *and* that I want to be on my own. Are you *deaf?"*

He blinks once and then meows, almost to himself, "Yeah... maybe I should have talked a bit more before asking that...."

"Or not ask that at all," I counter.

The tom gives a heavy sigh. "Will you please let me start over, like a proper introduction?"

I glare at him for a few heartbeats, and then eventually decide that maybe he'll stop hunting me down if I do. "Fine," I reply coolly.

He gives an appreciative nod - funny how quickly he can go from a mischievous kit to a formal kittypet - and starts. "First of all, my name is Scamper, but you can call me Scamp."

I have the politeness to not interrupt him; the shorter the conversation, the quicker we can part ways forever.

"Yes, I am - or *was* - what you called me; a *kittypet*. My housefolk - or Twolegs - randomly took their stuff and left the house one day, and never came back. I decided to leave my home, too, and wander the lands, to see what they have to offer. Now," the tom - or *Scamp* - concludes, "what's your story? You've been alone all your life?"

A pang enters my chest as I recall, once again, Hawkstrike. Sure, the Clan was nice, but Hawkstrike made me feel special, and have some more purpose to my life. Again, that swirl of envy entered my mind. Oh, how I wish Rosebreeze to -

"Is everything alright?" Scamp asks me, stretching his neck forward to look at my eyes.

Wow. Doesn't he love to speak at all the right times? But I say nothing... I don't know *what* to say. My mind is again clouded in those painful, lost feelings.

However, what *he* says next shocks me immensely.

"Something is causing pain to you, and - is that... envy?" Scamp takes a few paces closer to me. "I can see it in your eyes. What is it? You can tell me. Get it off your chest."

Curse him for taking advantage of me when my mind is clogged like this! But... I cannot resist.

"You want to know my story?" I begin. "Here it is: I lived in a Clan of cats called ForestClan, if you've ever heard of it. All my life my Clanmates and I got along well, going out on patrol together or hunting with each other, seeing how many pieces of prey we can catch. Clan-life is fun, and gives you a great purpose to live - to protect and take care of your Clanmates. But what I always considered to be the main goal in my life is to find a mate and have kits. And not too long ago, I thought I finally found the perfect tom in the Clan. His name was Hawkstrike. We began to hang out with each other a lot, talking and hunting and taking walks out in the forest. I was in love with him, and he was in love with me. Or... I thought. It turns out that his 'one true love' is a she-cat named Rosebreeze. I tried to get her out of the way so Hawkstrike and I could be mates, but obviously... that didn't happen. He ended up forcing me out of the Clan just to protect Rosebreeze from me. A coward move in my opinion, now that I think of it. A tom who isn't strong enough to protect his loved one? Hmph."

I honestly did not notice how much I am rambling....

"Wait, wait, wait..." Scamp meowed quickly, shaking his head before looking at me again. "This Hawkstrike cat *forced* you out of your Clan just so he can have Rosebreeze all to himself?"

I snort and reply, "I could have either left the Clan or stay but risk my life if I messed with either one of them."

"What a fox-heart!" he screeches. I was slightly surprised at his expression and fiery yellow eyes. "No offense, but how could you like a cat like that?"

My ears perk up. "He was perfect before that happened...."

But he's right. How *could* I like a cat like that? He practically threatened my life, and I'm still here missing him and getting jealous of who's with him.

Silence then spreads out between us two, until Scamp - of course it's

him - breaks it with the same question.

"So, may I travel with you?"

I look at him, but this time, no hostility - or, not as much as the past. "Give me one reason why I should allow you to travel with me."

His tail gives a happy flick. "Just wait - I need to think on this one." His gaze stares off to nothing for the longest time, but I am semi-flattered that he thinks I'm worth taking the time to think over an answer.

I see him nod slightly, as if agreeing with himself, and turn his attention back to me. "In my eyes, every cat deserves to be cared for in someway. Whether that'd be as a friend, or a partner." A few heartbeats pass. "Is that good enough?" he asks with bright eyes.

A wait a few more heartbeats before I give him my answer. "Good enough," I repeat. "But *only* for a few days. Is that clear?"

"It's perfect," he answers. I see a glint in his eye that gives me a feeling he can do better.

We will see.

"Hey, I just realized: you didn't give me your name."

"Cedarfrost. My name is Cedarfrost," I reply unhesitatingly.

"Cedarfrost..." echoes Scamp. "That's a unique name. I like it!"

"Thanks. It's a Clan name," I respond. Then I look at the fresh-kill. "Now, can I have my mouse back? I did find it after all, and haven't eaten since yesterday. I'm starving."

Scamp flashes me a grin and then goes to retrieve the prey. When his back is turned towards me, I can't help but give a small smile back.

Perhaps it will be interesting having a life outside the Clan.

~*~*~*~*~*~

I didn't really expect this first part to be this long but I think it's fine. ^-^

I actually have been thinking about writing this sequel for quite a while now, before school was even out for me. I love all the comments I got back on Me, or Her?. Most of them were hating on Cedarfrost xD But that's perfect, because 1) I love how I created a character where people genuinely hate and 2) it gave me the idea to make this sequel in the first place. I mean, now I think it's necessary to see Cedarfrost's point of view and how she feels about all that happened, and what will happen since she left the Clan.

I have no set schedule for this short story, so it will be updated at random until it is done. Keep a look out for it!

Thanks for reading! :D

Part 2: Screeching Regret

Hurrah!! Part 2 is *finally* out! Sorry there's such a huUUUGE gap between this and Part 1 (woaH from June to September? uhm srry) but it's out now, so that's all that matters, right?... right

I'll just let you get right into the story now x3

~*~*~*~*~

I duck beneath a bracken frond and then glance up at the sun between the leaves above. It is climbing down the blue sky, getting ever closer to the sunset. As I do that, a robin flutters above the forest's canopy, and I heave a great sigh. Oh, how I wish I could be a bird right now and just fly away. But on second thought, my life will most likely end at the paws of a cat....

It's worth it.

"Will you *shut up?"* I hiss at Scamp as I halt in my walking. Ever since I agreed to let him tag along with me for a few days only this morning, I have been regretting it. I don't remember the last time he stopped talking, besides the one time where he had to pause in order to sneeze. "If you want to continue traveling with me for even the rest of this day, please, just *please,* talk less. Or not at all," I mutter at the end.

The black tom stands before me with now flattened ears, and his amber eyes grow wide with guilt, as if he were a kit.

I do not feel any pity for him in the slightest.

"You mean you haven't been listening to me telling you about my old housefolk?" he queries with some sadness.

"I don't even care about your *housefolk,"* I spit out. I am acutely aware of how harsh that sounds, but he's asking for it. "I barely care

about kittypets. If you miss your Twolegs so much, why don't you just find some new ones who will gratefully fill your belly with kittypet slop?"

As I glare at him, I see that his eyes grow soft with hurt. But it's true - if he is missing his Twolegs, why not go back to where he belongs and rid this forest of cats like him who can't stand the wilderness alone?

A few, long seconds pass before Scamp replies to me. "You just don't understand," he meows quietly. "My housefolk are like your Clanmates; I've been with them my entire life. Don't *you* miss your Clanmates?"

His question manages to make me freeze and hold my breath. It echoes in my head, and with that, memories gradually rotate in my mind. Of playing mossball with the other kits while my mother watched; getting excited when I found out I was learning battle moves that day; becoming a warrior and receiving my rightful name. Memories all the way up to the very last one within ForestClan: Hawkstrike forcing me to leave, and that he and Rosebreeze will be with each other for the rest of their days.

"Cedarfrost, are you okay?"

Scamp's urgent speech snaps me out of all the images, and I take in a deep breath. I soon realize that my claws had unsheathed and dug themselves into the dirt beneath me. I quickly retract them and return to my normal snappy self. "Yes, I'm fine."

But the black tom continues to look intently at my eyes. Getting slightly uncomfortable, but still irritated, I try my best to avoid eye contact by staring at the grass or looking into the trees behind him. Can't he just leave me *alone?*

"Cedarfrost, if you need to say something, say it."

The way he says my name. He says it so... smoothly, like how water trickles slowly and gently down a leaf, or the touch of a worn-down stone on your paw pads.... My gaze gradually travels upward until it rests on Scamp's face. Not his eyes, but just his cheek. His black fur

looks so soft, so glossy as the small amount of sunlight that reaches between the leaves and branches shines on it almost luxuriously....

"Cedarfrost!" Scamp says suddenly as he takes a step forward.

I snap out of my small... *trance* and pay full attention to him.

"Are you *sure* you're all right? You seem like you are in a daze or something," he utters with a confused face on.

All I do is stand there and stare at him blankly, trying to think of something to say other than what my mind *wants* to say. I have to remember: this is a *kittypet;* I barely know him, and he will most likely not understand what I am saying about the Clan, anyway. Thankfully, and StarClan forbid this to happen in any other serious case, my stomach growls. Instantly, I think up the excuse of, "You're right; I do feel quite dazed, now that you mention it. And hungry too. Tell you what; we'll make a game out of this. We both will split up and whoever catches their prey first wins."

Holy Silverpelt, this tom is too easily distracted. I don't think there is even a heartbeat between when I finish talking and when *he* starts talking.

"Sounds good!" he agrees eagerly with now shining eyes and perked ears. "Where should we meet when we are finished hunting? And what prize does the winner get?"

"Just meet back here when you're done," I respond with much relief that he already forgot about the topic beforehand. "And the prize is..." I pause to think up of something. The answer is quite simple. "The prize is to start eating before the other cat."

"Okay!" His eyes shine like a kit's. He would never survive in a Clan if he had to. "Ready when you are."

I do not even say a word before I trot off in a direction of the forest. I am so thankful that Scamp has the sense to not go the exact same way I do. I heave a sigh of relief. *Finally,* some peace and quiet. But once again, my belly rumbles with hunger. Honestly, I do not care if I catch my prey first or not. Let Scamp beat me; it'll make him feel

good about himself, the tot mouse. The only thing I currently care most about is to just relax and actually enjoy the reaching trees around me without an obnoxious burden scampering to and fro noisily.

Huh. I know now why he is called *Scamper*. Typical kittypet.

Taking my time, I saunter on the forest floor and gaze at the long shadows growing on the brush as the sun sinks lower in the clear sky. A bird chirps overhead and, snapping my gaze toward it, I watch it fly into a tree and perch on a branch. Despite my belly growling in protest, I do not make any move to catch it. With all due respect, I would rather be hungry for a bit longer than to return to Scamp in the next few heartbeats.

But then a fowl stench reaches my nose, and immediately after, I hear a vicious growl behind me. My claws already unsheathing and my hackles rising, I turn on my attacker and meet it with a quick slash on the side of its face. Although blood is seeping onto its red-orange fur from the fresh wound, the fox does not flinch one bit. It jabs its muzzle forward in an attempt to sink its fangs into my neck, but I barely manage to duck out of the way and retreat back a few tail-lengths. I take that short of a time to measure the fox's size - and it is not good at all.

This fox is almost *triple* my size. Its yellow eyes seem to burn with a fire of determination, and strong muscles bustle underneath its pelt with every movement. I cannot take on this fox alone!

To my horror, the monstrous fox rushes at me, its teeth pulled back in a nasty snarl. I try to dodge the fox again, but I am slammed down onto the dirt on my flank with the heavy force of my opponent's paw. As I gasp for the breath that is driven out of me, a sharp pang pierces me as the fox sinks its teeth into my upper front leg. My gasping for air turns into a loud screech of pain. Oh, StarClan, this hurts! *Help me!* I snap my head toward the fox and reach for its neck, where I successfully sink my teeth in its skin until I can taste blood on my tongue.

But that joy is short lived as the fox retaliates and rakes its claws across my muzzle, causing another yowl to burst out of me.

This fox is too big, too strong for me. It would take five trained warriors to even just make it flee! Is this how I am to die, then? At the paws of a fox? My thoughts flash back to Hawkstrike and Rosebreeze. If I was like this in ForestClan territory, and if Hawkstrike were my mate, he would help me. He would protect me from any absolute danger in the wilderness. My heart aches more than the pain coursing through my body at the constant reminder that Hawkstrike will never be mine, and that Rosebreeze stole him from me. I just want someone who will love me as much as I love them.... But now that is impossible, for I am going to die.

I close my eyes and await StarClan to take me.

"Get off of her, you fiend!" I hear a roaring yowl before the weight atop of me is lifted.

My eyes snap open and I see Scamp fighting teeth and claw with the fox a few fox-lengths from where I still lie. He looks so brave, so agile as he swats and ducks, avoiding most of the fox's attacks while still doing at least some damage to it. His tail lashes furiously as he tries his best to keep balance on his hind legs as he fights.

"Run, Cedarfrost!" Scamp yowls to me with a glance back at me. *"Run!"*

He wants me to *run* while he fights that fox *alone?* Kittypets, they know nothing about battle. I pull my feet underneath me and push up to stand, but only to come falling down and landing on my side as pain shoots through my leg. For the first time, I look at it and see that the usually white fur of the entire upper half of one of my front legs is completely soaked red with blood. My mind begins to whirl a bit at the sight of it. I then rub a paw on my muzzle and look at it, seeing that it too is covered with blood from where the fox scratched me. My head spins even more with the overwhelming rusty scent of my own blood and the fierce yowling and screeching of Scamp and the fox fighting.

My head hits the ground.

The last thing I hear is Scamp caterwauling, "Cedarfrost!"

And then everything goes black.

~*~*~*~*~*~

wOWOWOWO CLIFF HANGER PLZ

Funny thing is that while I was in the process of planning out most of the parts I was thinking that this wouldn't be as good as Me, or Her? Because I've kind of skimmed through it a couple of times before starting this and I'm like "woAH CHEESE HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THAT THAT'S AMAZING WOWZA" and ye. But as I finished this part, that rapidly changed my small opinion. I think I've done good so far :3

But what matters the most is how *you* think of this short story-book thing so far! Please let me know in the comments; feedback is always appreciated! :)

I don't know when Part 3 will be out as I just finished writing Part 2, but let's shoot for maybe... Sept. 20th, two weeks from now? I don't know, we'll see ^w^

Thanks so much for reading! Don't forget to vote, comment, add, and share! .u.

Part 3: Dubious Uttering

Hello :3

Quick note: This part will *might* be a bit boring to some of you; I'm not sure, though. There's a lot of dialogue, and not much happens, but hopefully it will still sate some of your hunger for reading x3 This is also a tiny bit more than 3,000 words, so prepare yourself, and enjoy Part 3! :D

~*~*~*~*~*~

The warm scent of fresh-kill hits my nose, causing it to twitch. I slowly open my eyes and see that a dead mouse lay a few whisker-lengths in front of me where I am sprawled out on the ground. I soon realize that it is not just my vision that is dark, but that it is actually night. Gently turning my head to look upward, I see the claw-sliver of the moon mildly casting its light down between the leaves overhead. It is around moonhigh.

And then the stinging comes in, first on my muzzle, and then, more painful, on one of my front legs. The memory quickly revives itself in my mind of the fight with the fox as I look at my leg. However, instead of the bloody mass I am excepting to see, all the blood is cleaned from my fur and the wound is white, covered in cobwebs.

"Guess I will have to stay with you now."

I snap my head to the source of the murmur and see that Scamp is sitting next to a tree a couple of tail-lengths away from me. Even though he is practically invisible in the darkness, I can still barely make out his ruffled black fur, but the single white patch of fur on his chest stands out bright as day.

I then glance at the fresh-kill again and realize that he must have caught it. For me. My fur begins to bristle and I feel the anger boil in my chest. "I don't need your help!" I hiss at him through the dark.

Even from where he stands by the tree, I see him flinch a bit at my harsh tone. I feel no remorse as I carry on. "Why should a kittypet take care of me, who has been living in the wilderness my entire life? I can catch my own prey, thank you very much, and without *you* getting in the way."

To prove my point, I shakily push myself up, rather forcefully. Out of the corner of my eye, I see Scamp take a couple paces forward, but I ignore him. I am pleased when I do succeed in standing straight. I take a step forward and place my first paw down.

Pain shoots through my injured leg and spreads throughout my whole body. It buckles beneath me and I fall - only to then be jerked back up as Scamp grabs my scruff between his teeth. He pulls me upward and I scrabble to find my footing. When I eventually do, he releases his grip slowly, as if with caution that if he were to lay one hair on me I would fall right over. Not knowing what to do, and to cover up my great embarrassment I feel - curse my glowing white pelt, fluffed up visibly in these shadows - I growl deeply, but softly, and await his retort.

It is completely different from what I expect, however.

"Tell me about your Clan," the tom says to me quietly. Almost genuinely.

His order takes me by surprise and my head snaps to look at his glistening amber eyes in the night. "What?" I quickly come up with some fighting words; I will not let him get what he potentially wants that easily, if at all. "What makes you think that I will willingly inform you about my Clan?"

"You told me some about it not even a full sunrise ago."

Fox dung. Curse my scattered head.... I cannot mistake the slight humor that twinkles in his eyes, either. StarClan, I hate this tom. Why did that fox have to cross my path?

Or, rather, why did this tom?

He continues, "Like, what does everyone do? You said something

before about going on patrols and hunting. Is that all?"

I glare at him for a long moment, contemplating whether I should give a truthful reply to him or not. He's a kittypet - does he *really* care about all this? For all I know, he could be daydreaming about that disgusting, infamous slop his kind stuff their bellies with all day. But as I look once again into his eyes, I see something that looks like concern. Something shifts inside of me, but I do not know what.

Fine. Why not? It's not like I will be able to sprint away from him, considering it seems that we always run into each other one way or another.

A strange pang emits in the depths of my belly. What was that? Fear? Excitement? I have not a clue.

"Well, first of all," I begin monotonously, "there are different roles each cat has. I am - err, *was* a warrior," I stutter, "so I would have done the hunting and fighting for the Clan, like when a badger or something strays into the territory. There is a leader, and they have their deputy to help them with decisions and such. Apprentices train to be warriors once they are ready, and elders are great entertainment for kits when the queens want to rest. Lastly, there is a medicine cat, who takes care of those who are wounded or sick." I choose not to tell him about StarClan and potential prophecies; I figure a cat like him would find all that hard to believe.

"Seems all very organized," Scamp comments simply.

And you seem very nosy, though I have the kind heart to not say that aloud.

He then muses, as if to himself, "If I were in a Clan like that, I think it'd be pretty neat to be a medicine cat."

But it is not to just himself, as I hear him. My eyes widen with surprise and I turn my head to stare down at the cobwebs on my leg. "You mean - *you* know how to use *herbs?"* The shock is plain in my voice.

He takes a step closer to me to admire his work. "Who else would have done that all the way out here? Unless you did it while you were unconscious, or another group of cats similar to yours lives around here." I glance up at him and see humor glinting in his eyes, like always.

How is he always so lighthearted, after I have snapped and hissed at him so much? However much I am curious, I brush it away for now and turn back to the shocking matter at paw.

"How did you learn of how they work, or have access to the forest to gather some?" I am too awed to keep the surprise hidden.

Scamp snorts. "Do all you wildcats think that we 'kittypets' are trapped in our homes?" He doesn't give me time to reply, though I don't feel like giving him an answer, anyhow. "My housefolk and I lived right on the outskirts of the Twolegplace, where the forest stretched almost immediately once you left the gardens." I have no idea what these so-called 'gardens' are, but I leave it be. "They usually allowed me to go into the forest as long as I came back not long after." His gaze slowly drifts away from me as if in some sort of reverie, and his head droops in a kind of longing, I assume.

After quite a while of him doing so, I clear my throat and repeat, "How did you learn their uses, though?"

Snapping out of his thoughts and shaking his head to clear it, he perks up again and answers, "Oh, yes! A - rather old - she-cat who lived with her housefolk a couple houses away from mine would go into the forest, and she taught me how to use all the herbs we found for healing. No one really knows how she *herself* learned about herbs, but it's been a rumor for quite some time now that she was once a wildcat." He pauses, staring at me with round, mischievous eyes - much like a kit's. "Like you."

The sudden, uncalled-for insult causes me to hiss and bare my teeth at him, rage returning in my bones. "Will you *stop* calling me a wildcat?" I screech fiercely. "If anything, call me a *warrior."*

He takes a step backward, but his happy expression stays the exact same - unless, if it did change, it was only a heartbeat that I missed

before returning to its initial face. "I'm sorry, *warrior*. Hey, maybe someday you and I could start a Clan together? I could be the medicine cat, and you could be the leader. It could be called CedarClan, or ScampClan.... Which sounds better to you? I personally like ScampClan."

I gaze at him in silence, my burning anger gradually cooling off. I like to think that it is the night air that is doing so. But again, he dodged my outburst at him so simply, like a fish slithering out of the paws of an untrained apprentice. How is he able to keep his blissfulness so easily? For a moment I am slightly envious of his ability, while I am practically raised upon anger and grief and... I realize, envy.

How ironic.

But with my rambling thoughts, and the talk of Clans, my hatred for Rosebreeze and my ache for Hawkstrike reoccurs.

"I'm sorry, Scamp, but I honestly have had enough of Clans to my liking." Slowly, and consciously aware of the black tom watching me warily, I settle myself down on the ground. The hotness and coldness I feel right now inside of me swirl around each other, like a storm is about to break out and shed its tears of anger and sadness.

It is exactly how I feel at the moment.

Scamp then closes the small distance between us and lies down next to me. My skin tingles uncomfortably where his fur brushes against mine, but I stay put. "Don't be so sad, Cedarfrost. That was is the past. Everything is in the past once it has passed. Like the words I just said to you, they are now in the past! Time just keeps moving on and on and on, and as it does, things change. And as things change, they get better." He pauses and sets his chin down on one of his paws. "Things always get better. Eventually."

I turn my head away from him and stare out into the darkness of the trees. The words he just said were ramblings from a crazy cat. "That's easy for *you* to say," I murmur to myself, and pray he did not hear me. If he did, he gives no sign of it.

I feel like I am trapped in this endless rotation of distraught. Of vexation. Of despair. It has been not even a full sunrise, as Scamp said before, that I have been with him, a full night since Hawkstrike forced me from the Clan, to be alone with Rosebreeze for the rest of their lives, yet it feels like several moons. My claws dig into the cool dirt beneath me and I hiss out a breath, a fresh wave of all these horrible feelings crashing down on top of me.

There is a slight rustling beside me as Scamp gets up from where he was beside me. The sudden rush of cold air meets the side on which he was on, but I do not turn my head to look at him. A heartbeat later, he reappears in front of me, and the small whiff of the mouse causes me to look in his direction then. He sets the dead mouse down in front of me and nudges it forward.

"Here, eat," he says softly. "It's growing cold, but the food will help your wound heal a bit quicker overnight." He glances up at the sky to where the moon is steadily falling down the starry expanse above the forest's canopy. "Or overday, I guess."

A quiet *mrrow* escapes from my mouth, but only lasts half a heartbeat. I take that it is from the madness that I feel faintly pressing at the edges of my consciousness, lingering, as if waiting to pounce once the time is right. With no word, I begin tearing into the tender, rather cold meat, but my belly is thankful still.

When I am finished eating, I look up to barely see Scamp a bit away from me in the thick darkness. It seems that he is searching for something in the trees, but I cannot guess what. I have just eaten; I don't need anything more. Maybe he is hunting for himself? But from the quick scans and straight posture compared to the focused crouch for hunting, that throws that out of the question. However, before I can ask, his figure perks up in the minuscule moonlight and he lunges forward behind a tree, now out of my view. After a few long heartbeats of him not reappearing, I decide to get up and go -

Renewed pain bursts alive in my leg, and I am forced back to my initial position, biting back a yowl. Curse that fox!

But my attention is immediately returned to Scamp and his sudden disappearance. Is he... all right? He didn't run into a badger or

another fox, did he? No, because there would be sounds of battle piercing the night air. Where did he -

"This is *perfect!"* His gleeful mewl interrupts the silence a moment before he appears from behind a tree and trots toward me. "Come on, let me show you!"

Before I could say anything in my shock, he nudges me to my feet, taking practically all of my weight on the side of my injured leg. As we slowly make progress to his discovery, I ask, "What exactly did you find that is so perfect?"

We then get to the tree and round it, and I see that there is a gaping hole opening itself up on one side, large enough for at least two cats to crawl inside. Scamp did not have to answer me, for I knew now that he is talking about a den. Then a brand new fighting thought strikes me, and I turn my head to him. "Why do we need a den? I am not planning on staying here forever." *In this forest, with all my life memories,* I might add. The thought causes my all too familiar problem to resurface on my mind, but as Scamp talks again, it is brushed away. For now.

"I know, but it is going to take a while for your leg wound to heal, don't you think?" He says this with a gentle kindness, like a queen telling her kit that hurting their littermate is not the most affectionate thing to do. "It will be at least a couple more days until it's healed well enough to go back to your normal routine, but for now, we might as well be comfortable where we currently are."

I do not know if I begin to grow embarrassed about how I didn't think of that on my own and angry at his suggestion of staying here for at *least* two more days. But then I realize that he said *we* might as well be comfortable, not *you,* as in *me.*

He must have caught that, too, for when I am still contemplating whether on bringing that up or not, he urges me back onto the ground, my belly now touching the grass and dirt beneath, while a strange awkwardness twists around in it like a worm.

"I'll be right back," he announces quickly as he retreats a few fox-lengths away into the forest. "I'm going to find some moss or ferns

for nests."

Leaving me alone next to the apparent den - to *our* apparent den? - I have only me and my own rambling thoughts to keep me company. The thought of the awkward wording from before quickly shifts to the fact that he knows how to build a nest, and to find a den. Confusion engulfs me then. He *is* a kittypet, is he not? He still bears the blue collar that his Twolegs claimed him with. Then how could he possibly know all this stuff that the Clan does?

I eventually figure it must have been the old she-cat who had also taught him of herbs. Yes, it *must* have been; it's the only possible way.

Before long, Scamp returns with a huge wad of moss and ferns - just what he promised he would retrieve - and sets them next to the tree. I watch in silence as he begins to create two nest inside of the tree den, as perfectly as any Clan cat would have done. Almost as if he feels my gaze upon him, he glances at me, and I quickly relocate my gaze up to the sky. It is then that I notice the first light of dawn as the sun gradually begins to climb above the horizon. Some stars have already begun to fade away, waiting patiently for them to continue their sparkling the next night.

"Done!" Scamp chirps merrily. He exits the den and stands beside me so we can admire his work together.

I have nothing to say, but a yawn erupts from me.

That gets Scamp's attention, as he again is gently thrusting his shoulder beneath my flank to bring me upward. He guides me into the den, down the slight slope in the earth, and settles me on one of the nests. I am surprised at how comfortable it does feel, and brings even more memories of the Clan back to me. Again, however, before I can speak what my mind wants to vent, Scamp beats me.

"Get some sleep, okay?" Scamp gazes down at me, and if I didn't know any better, I'd say rather... fondly. "You'll wake up when you wake up. I won't stray far."

He lingers for a few heartbeats longer before finally leaving the tree

den and lying down himself a couple tail-lengths in front of the entrance. As if he were guarding me from any danger that dares threaten to hurt me, like a lover -

I abruptly shake my head. Where in StarClan's name did *that* come from? Holy frog, I must be *very* tired.

With that, I rest my head between my front paws on the soft moss beneath me and close my eyes, urging any lasting thoughts from my head to dissipate and give me a restful sleep I desperately need.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~

My gosh, I love writing this story. Just writing in general. *happy sigh* /).w.(

I hope you are enjoying this story, as well! I am planning and really hoping to finish this by the end of October, which I would think would be doable, as there are only thwo parts left, but each would most likely be more than 2,000 words. :)

Thanks so much for reading! Don't forget to vote, comment, add, and share! It really does mean and help a lot <3

Part 4: Fishy Thoughts

I slowly open my eyes to see the sun's rays peeking into the tree den. The scent of thrush drifts to my nose, and I see the fresh-kill lying a few whisker lengths away from me on the dirt floor.

So, Scamp went out and got more fresh-kill for me, did he? Though I should be thankful, considering my wretched situation.

I reach out and drag the dead thrush closer to me and dig in.

"Ah, good afternoon, Cedarfrost!"

I look up at the sound of Scamp's cheery voice and see him bound to the entrance to the den, where he gazes happily down at me.

"Are you enjoying your thrush?" he asks, sitting down and wrapping his tail around him.

I nod and swallow my mouthful of meat. "Thrush is actually one of my favorite types of fresh-kills."

His eyes lit up. "Perfect, then!" He pauses a moment as I take another bite. It is a bit unsettling, having someone watch me eat, but I am starving, so I do not mind as much. "When you are done eating, I'm going to help you with your walking. To get your strength back up."

At his announcement, I choke on my mouthful, and a fit of coughing takes me over until I can finally swallow it properly. Anger rose within me. Does he think I am not strong? I am a warrior! He is but a mere kittypet! I could beat him in a fight any day!

Except for the fact that I am maimed and can't even stand without assistance.

I take a deep breath to calm me, my anger disintegrating. Why must I always be so hotheaded?

"You should do it sooner rather than later," the tom adds on. "What if another dog comes along?"

I see that he is right, for I would not even be able to climb a tree like last time. I nod in agreement and finish up the last few bites of my thrush.

When I am done, Scamp comes into the den and helps me up. I lean on his shoulder as he boosts me up and out of the den onto the flatter, grassy ground.

"All right," the black tom began, "first I want to see you stand without my help. I'm going to slowly remove my shoulder from beneath you so you can get your balance."

I appreciate how he tells me what he is going to do before he actually does it. He does as he said with me trying to find my balance. I gingerly put pressure on my injured leg and am very pleased to learn that the pain does not hurt as much as it did before; it still hurts a little, but it is bearable. His shoulder is fully removed, and I successfully stand on my own.

"The scratches on your muzzle look like they're almost healed. How does your leg feel?" he asks. He reminds me of a medicine cat, making sure every whisker-length of your body is as it should be.

"Well, I haven't fallen over like last time yet, so that's good," I reply. He gives a *mrrow* at that, and a warm feeling tingles within me. StarClan, his eyes are beautiful, the amber color seeming golden in the sunlight, dancing with amusement and joy. I could stare into them forever; they look just like Hawkstrike's -

What am I *saying?*

I am filled with great relief as Scamp moves on.

"Try taking a few steps forward - slowly, though. Carefully," he urges.

I do as he says, him walking right next to me so he can catch me if I fall. I stumble once or twice, but manage to stay upright, and successfully get from the tree den to another tree several tail-

lengths away.

"Good work!" he commends, his eyes continuing their gleaming streak. "How are you feeling? Nothing is hurting?"

I snort in playful exasperation. "I am not a kit using my legs for the first time, keep that in mind."

Again, he gives out a soft purr of amusement, and I feel good about myself for causing him to do so twice now.

"Then you aren't scared to go further?" he asks, leaning in close to me with a mischievous glint in his bright amber eyes.

"I am not scared to face two badgers!" I retort.

That answer seems to please him, for he nods. "Perfect," he meows simply, though there is a knowing look in his eyes.

You sure can tell a lot from this kittypet by looking into his eyes.

Like we did just moments before, I take my time walking among the trees and avoiding the underbrush while Scamp stays close beside me. Close enough that our pelts brush each other every once in a while. I realize that he is casually trying to guide me somewhere, and I allow him. What does he want now?

Several badger-lengths away from the tree den, and I still feel perfectly fine. Wow, he truly *is* good at medicine. I bet Ravenflower would have loved to have Scamp as her medicine cat apprentice back in Fore -

I shook my head to clear the thought from it. I think it is quite unhealthy of me to think of... *that place.*

The entire time, when I am not concentrating on my steps, I wonder where Scamp is taking me. I resist the urge to ask him, because I am pretty certain that he wants this to be a complete surprise. In a way, it still is a surprise, since I have no clue where I am going.

He eventually halts, and I stop with him. "Hey, what's up there?" he asks, narrowing his eyes as he gazes up ahead. I see in those amber

orbs that he already knows what is 'up there', and is excited.

I follow is gaze and peer ahead between a line of trees. After a while I notice that there is a river slicing across the land, the bright afternoon sun shining on its surface. Is *that* what he took me all this way for? A river? Hmph. At least it's not his stinking Twolegplace.

"It's a river," I answer him and say nothing else, waiting to see what he has to say next.

"Yeah, I guess it is a river." An awkward pause passes between us as we both stare at it. A few heartbeats later, he turns his head toward me. "Do you want to go closer to it?"

I return his look with a blank face, though I am trying my absolute best to not break out laughing at how hard he is trying to get me to do what he wants. What in the mighty Silverpelt's name is this adorable furball planning?

...What in StarClan's name is happening to me?

Am I still tired or something? Whatever. I push it aside for now.

"Sure." At my effortless, dull answer, it seems like Scamp's building excitement bursts out of him and he bounds forward a good five fox-lengths before remembering me and returning to my side to be there in case I fall as I slowly walk toward the river's sandy bank. I deliberately go even slower than before, my whiskers twitching in great amusement as I sense Scamp quivering in eagerness. He reminds me so much of a brand new apprentice allowing to leave the camp for the very first time in six moons.

We eventually break through the trees and come upon the sandy banks of the river. The river is a about half a tree-length long, and its current speeds quite swiftly downward. I see a few birds loitering on the shore a bit away, pecking at the sand; they're lucky I have already eaten. It is, however, a beautiful scene altogether. Relaxing, even.

Scamp urges me even closer to the river so that we are only a pawstep away from the rushing water. The bank in this area ends

abruptly, the sand acting like a small version of a cliff with the river a small distance below.

"Do you like it?" Scamp asks me enthusiastically. He takes one good look at everything and then rests his warm, joyful gaze on me.

It takes me a couple heartbeats to break my focus from his eyes to the river again. "Yeah, it's gorgeous." I give him a sidelong glance. "This is actually a bit new to me. There's no river near ForestClan territory; only a pond -"

The Moonlight Pond. Hawkstrike and I stayed there for one night, talking to each other, gazing up at the stars, our pelts pressed up against each other the entire time. We were *in love.* It was obvious. His amber eyes were always gazing passionately into my own green ones, I swear it. Why did he decide to choose Rosebreeze instead of *me?* Why -

"Cedarfrost?"

Scamp's soft, cautious voice breaks my ranting thoughts for StarClan knows what time now. I look at him and see his amber eyes gazing with concern into my own green ones. I glance down and see once again my claws have dug themselves into the ground beneath me. My throat had tightened as if I were holding back a wail; but perhaps I am. A wail of distress. Of anger. Of all the emotions I have ever felt since I left almost two nights ago.

Already two nights.

Only two nights.

I don't know what to say to Scamp in this moment. But fortunately, and as if he could read my mind or feels what I want, he shakes it off and turns his attention back to the river. I do the same, discarding the incident.

A long moment of the river splashing and the birds cawing passes before either one of us speaks. And the one to speak first is Scamp, as always.

"Do you know how to catch fish?" his question comes calmly.

I look aside at him with a puzzled expression on my face. "No, I don't." Why would he want to know that? Instead, I ask in return, "Do you?"

He nods vigorously. Before I can even question him why in the world a kittypet would know how to catch fish, he answers, "You remember the old she-cat I told you about who taught me about herbs? Well, she also taught me how to catch fish. And, oh, how I can tell you how much better fish is than the hard food my housefolk gave me!" His eyes twinkle with a satisfied memory.

"I believe that," I comment. "I would think *anything* will be better than that kittypet slop. Even fish."

He then narrows his eyes at me, a hint of mischief glinting within the amber. "Have you ever had fish before?"

"No," I respond, a bit irritated. "Like I said before, I didn't grow up near a river. But I've heard many things about eating fish as fresh-kill, and most of it was not good or appetizing."

"Whelp, this is your lucky day!" Scamp bursts out immediately and crouches down at the edge of the bank, staring into the river.

I blink in confusion. "What? What are you doing?"

He looks back at me from his position. "I'm going to teach you how to catch your own fish, and then I want you to try it."

My eyes widen in shock. He *cannot* be serious. I am a cat, not a bear!

Before I can protest, he continues. "Come here and crouch beside me and I'll walk you through it. Watch me first, though."

After a few heartbeats of contemplating if I should obey him or not, I eventually, rather hesitantly do as he says. I wait for him to do something, say something, but he seems so intently focused on the water rushing past below us, so I do the same. But there is only water; what is he looking for?

Just then, I spot a flash of silver beneath the surface to my side and

jump back as Scamp bursts into action. He shoots his paw underneath the water and quickly brings it back up again. Before I know it, there is a silver fish flopping on the bank beside us, and Scamp bends down and bites its neck, the fish going limp as it dies.

Scamp looks expectantly at me. "Want to try?"

I have to admit, that *was* pretty skilled. And I suppose it won't hurt to get some extra hunting tips from this tom before he leaves.

A strange pang within me comes and goes in the matter of a heartbeat.

"Sure." I shrug, discarding... whatever just happened to me.

"Awesome. Start by crouching at the edge of the bank like I did before," he begins instructing me. "You need to turn all your focus toward the water, looking for any sign of silver, which signifies a fish. Immediately when you see the silver, you need to shoot one paw into the water a whisker-length or two ahead of it. In order to pull it up and out, you need to hook your paw, like so." He lifts one of his paws up from the ground in a hook form, his claws unsheathed and pointing upward. "It makes it easier to hold the fish and pull it up with your claws sunken into it. Then you throw it on the ground and give the killing bite." After a while of me just standing there, he urges enthusiastically, "Go on, try it!"

I walk to the edge of the bank again and crouch down. Staring down into the rushing water, I try my best to turn all my attention toward it, blocking out any distractions, though I am very aware of Scamp gazing encouragingly at me. I shake my head to clear it and try harder. One, two, three, heartbeats, still no flash of silver. Four, five -

There!

I lunge forward as I shoot my paw beneath the surface.

And then I can feel my back feet scrambling on the collapsing sand as the bank gives way to my weight.

"Cedarfrost!"

And then I am surrounded by cold water, my vision darkened, my hearing muted. I flail my paws aimlessly, trying to break the surface, but the fast current only allows me to tumble along with it. My chest grows tight from lack of air.

But then I feel someone brush against me and pull on my scruff, bringing me upward. I finally break the surface, and I draw in the best breath of air I have ever had. I start to sputter and cough as my savior drags me across the river to an area in the bank where the sand meets directly with the water's edge. I am pulled up it and lie on the sand, continuingly coughing and taking heavy breaths.

After a long moment, I finally regain my normal breathing and the coughing calms down, though I am shivering with my cold, wet fur.

"Cedarfrost, are you all right?"

I look up and see Scamp standing over me. He wears a exceedingly worried expression, and his black fur is also drenched like mine. Anger boils within me, almost warming me up. I feel like something inside of me snaps, and without even realizing it, I push myself up. "All right?" I echo, growling fiercely. "I almost drowned, and all you ask is if I'm *all right?* This is all *your* fault! If you hadn't made me try to catch a fox-hearted fish, this wouldn't have happened to me! If you hadn't taken me to this stupid river in the first place, this wouldn't have happened!" I squeeze my eyes shut furiously, my legs shaking not from the coldness, but from rage. I snap them open and glare at Scamp with fire. "If you would have just left me alone and mind your own StarClan forsaken business then everything would be *perfect!"*

Except it *wouldn't* be perfect.

It's like I wake up from sleeping, and now I am aware of what I had just done as I look at Scamp. He has sadness in his eyes. *Guilt.* And his ears are flattened. My face softens instantly and I take a step back. "Scamp, I'm so sorry," I apologize greatly, softly. "I don't know what took me over. I just...."

I just what? Let my anger control me, like it always does? Maybe that's why Hawkstrike chose Rosebreeze over me. Because I can't be

as passionate towards him as he was towards me. Because I let my anger at Rosebreeze take me over, forcing me to do the things I did.

I lie heavily down on the sand. I feel weak, and not just from my desperate struggle only a moment ago.

That is it. That is why.

Hawkstrike would never chose me in a million moons.

I release a long sigh.

Perfect.

Nothing can be perfect. Ever.

"It's okay, Cedarfrost," comes Scamp's gentle voice. "I don't blame you."

Who do you blame, then, if not me? I want to ask, but hold my tongue. I don't respond to him. Instead, I lick my fur, hoping to dry off and warm up sooner. The sun is sinking lower and lower into the sky, so there are not many rays of its warm light to help me. After a few moments of me doing so, Scamp moves closer to me and starts helping me, licking my fur in gentle, rhythmic laps, like a kit's mother or father would do.

And then all of a sudden, he licks one time on my cheek. I snap my head towards him and stare at him with wide eyes. Did he mean to do that...? He returns my gaze, looking at me with his warm amber eyes until he broke the connection.

"It's getting pretty late," Scamp states, looking at the setting sun. "We should get going back to the den now. It'll be warmer in there."

I nod my agreement and push myself up, and I am miraculously able to walk with no assistance with only stumbling two times on the way back to the tree den. Scamp pads beside me the entire way there, though we both silently agree to be quiet for now.

~*~*~*~*~*~

Wow. This is the longest part yet; over 3,000 words!

I hope you are enjoying this short story so far! Sadly, there is only one part left after this, but I think the journey writing it was very fun! :D

Don't forget to Vote, Comment, Add, and Share! :3

Part 5: A True Lover's Heart

The distant chirping of birds reaches my ears from where I lie in the tree den. I slowly open my eyes and see that Scamp is still beside me in his own nest, his flank rising up and down rhythmically in his slumber. For the longest time, I stay still, my eyes staring at nothing and everything. A strange feeling engulfs me, a feeling of... emptiness? I feel like I am missing something inside of me, something I am missing in my life, but I have no hint as to what it may be. Only what was there has been replaced by numbness.

I close my eyes for a few heartbeats before opening them again. This time across from me, Scamp has opened his eyes, as well.

"Good morning," he greets softly, as if he either does not want to disturb the quietness or he is afraid that I will burst out on him again from a couple simple words. I truly hope it is not the latter.

I do not reply, only stare into his amber eyes with the same emptiness as before. But then that empty feeling grows deeper. It is as if there is also a *longing* for something.

Before I can put much more thought into the matter, however, Scamp gets up, shakes out his fur, and climbs out of the tree den. Looking back down at me, he asks, "Do you think you are well enough to hunt? I've been catching prey for you all this time; it'd be nice to see you in action for once." He looks away and then back at me. "Action in hunting that is."

Nice save. I give a soft huff of amusement and then follow him out. "Sure," I answer, "but this time I'll catch prey for both me and you. We'll share it."

He nods in agreement and motions with his tail to signal for me to

be in front.

As I lead the way through the forest, I pay attention to any fresh scents of prey as well as the beauty of the forest itself. The soft rays of the morning sun reach down under the cover of leaves where it can in the gaps and offers more than enough light to make our way through the tangle of underbrush. The grass that brushes against our paws is wet with dew and leaves our fur slightly wet, but it is nothing compared to what happened last night. I'm thankful that my pelt is almost fully dry from my small dip in the river, save for some water that is stubbornly staying in my ear. The air is crisp and full of energy as everything that lives in the shelter of the trees wakes up and starts their morning routine.

My mind wanders for a bit from the hunt to me almost drowning last night. Yes, it *is* partially Scamp fault for bringing me to the river in the first place, but what if he hadn't rescued me from my peril? What if he had just left me to drown? Or worse, what if he had drowned *with* me? I glance back at the black tom and see that his eyes are unfocused, as if he is deep in thought like me. Is he thinking about last night, too? Or something more than that?

A faint trace of the scent of thrush reaches my nose and pulls me from my vivid questioning. I sense that Scamp does, too, and we both immediately get into our hunter mode. I soon find the thrush several fox-lengths away near some bracken fronds, pecking at the ground and searching for its worms. I crouch, and Scamp has the sense to stay low and quiet. Though I should expect it of him now, since he *has* gotten me my food since he tagged along with me three days ago.

Focusing on the thrush, I slowly and silently creep up on it. I do not have to worry much about my scent drifting towards it, as there is gratefully no breeze this fine morning. I stop when I am a few tail-lengths behind it and get ready to pounce, but then I think, why not show Scamp some of my hunting skills? My whiskers twitch in excitement at the thought of impressing this kittypet.

I waggle my hindquarters and pounce, but purposefully fall a whisker-length too short, and the poor bird jumps as it is startled and instantly flies up into the air. But as it gets almost two fox-

lengths above me, I bunch my legs and push off the ground, jumping high up into the air. My outstretched claws snag the thrush's tail, and I manage to keep a hold on it as I fall back down. Slamming my paw onto the ground, I hear a crack as the impact snaps the thrush's spine, but I nip its neck to make sure it is dead. Picking it up in my jaws, I turn toward Scamp and raise my tail in success.

"Is it just me, or did you look like a frog when you made that jump?" he comments with a sweep of his tail and an amused sparkle in his eyes.

Rolling my eyes, I set the fresh-kill down and respond with equal mischief, "I assure you that I am fully cat, not frog, frog-brain."

He gives a *mmrow* of laughter. "That was amazing, though," he continues. "I think my best catch was on a mouse that ran right into a rock out of panic." He paused. "Or I guess that was my *funniest* catch."

I gaze at him for a while longer before reclaiming my prize and making the way back to the tree den. Shaking my head to myself, I grow slightly curious on how Scamp's mind works. It's great, really. It must be the work of StarClan that he has come this far. Or perhaps his kittypet ancestors watch him very closely from their holy litter boxes.

Great rabbit, it's so easy and fun to joke about kittypets and their ways. But Scamp, he is no ordinary kittypet. I glance aside at him and look briefly at the blue collar he wears around his neck. I wonder why he has not taken it off of him yet? I can only think of two answers: either he wants to keep some memory of his Twolegs, or he simply cannot get it off.

We return to the tree den and settle a couple tail-lengths away from it. I pull some feathers out of the thrush so that we don't have to practically eat them, spitting a few at Scamp, where they stick to his nose or get caught in his whiskers. I happily watch him shake his head to get them off of him.

"You get first bite, since you caught it," he insists after his little

ordeal.

I want to argue with him, to say that he should get first bite because of all the prey we ate before this caught by him, but I force my mouth shut and refrain from doing so. I have already argued enough with him since we first met, and after last night, I want to try my best to keep the peace in the air.

In answer, I do take the first bite of the thrush, but I allow him to have his first bite from the meatiest and best part. We eat in silence, the noises of the forest all we need right now.

A few moments pass, and the fresh-kill is about half-eaten. And at that time, Scamp stands up after swallowing his mouthful. I assume that he is full and is going back to the tree den, but he begins walking in the opposite direction of it. My mind is filled with confusion like a dip in the ground is filled with rainwater.

"Scamp," I ask, my voice light with kindness, but I try my best to keep the true fear I feel hidden, "where are you going?"

The black tom halts in his steps and slowly turns back around to look at me. His expression is almost unreadable, but I can still detect a small sadness in his eyes. His bright, amber eyes. When he speaks, it is monotonous, so very unlike his usual spunk. "It's the fourth day I have been with you - more than you agreed to. I guess this is goodbye." He turns to leave again.

Dread causes my heart to skip a beat and then beat rapidly. He's... he's *leaving?* Has it seriously been only four days since we met? *Already* four days? My mind fast forwards through everything that has happened since I left ForestClan: the dog who caused me to climb up the tree Scamp was in in the first place; Scamp's annoying chattering like a squirrel the entire first day; the fox attack and Scamp coming in to rescue me; Scamp helping me recover with my walking; and then Scamp later on rescuing me from drowning in the river. We've been through so much together, and the thought of him leaving.... The longing within me grows even more, and now I understand what it is.

I do not want Scamp to leave me.

"Scamp, wait!" My call is louder than I initially intend it to be, but right now I don't give a single dung. He looks over his shoulder at me, the same expression on his face, though now with a small touch of hope. I open my mouth to say something other than those two words, but my mind goes blank. A moment passes. A long moment of us just staring into each other's eyes. His bright, amber eyes.

And then I know what I need to say.

"Scamp, I want to say that I'm sorry for how I behaved since we met. I was just so heartbroken that Hawkstrike chose Rosebreeze over me. I felt like my life was over, that I had nothing else to do with it, because I thought my future was to be with Hawkstrike, but he ruined it. I know I wasn't the friendliest she-cat most of the time, but the longer we have been with each other, it made me realize that some things aren't meant to happen, but some things are. It could *not* have been just by chance that I climbed up the same tree you were in - and need I remind you, I was planning on climbing that particular tree before I even knew you were there. I think... I think we were supposed to meet. And I am now thankful for Hawkstrike making me leave ForestClan, or else I wouldn't have found you."

I gaze at Scamp to see his reaction. His face has softened, and he takes a couple steps forward. Before he says anything, I add in a voice that carries as much affection, care, and passion as possible, "I love you, Scamp. Please, don't leave."

There is only a single heartbeat that separates my words from Scamp's actions. He rushes forward and presses his chest up against mine, nuzzling my ear with his nose. "I love you, too, Cedarfrost," he responds in a murmur with as much affection, care, and passion as I did. His nose his soft against my ear, soothing. My heart aches with love, and the emptiness I felt when I woke up is now filled with warmth.

Eventually, he pulls back to stare into my green eyes, his amber ones now shining with the life of love. My heart swells even more. "When I first saw you running from that dog down below me, I felt in my heart that I needed to talk to you, needed to stay with you, at least for a while. I felt that something was going to happen.

Something special. I don't know how I knew, but I did. I just had... *something* in my mind, telling me that I had to." He glances down at the ground for a couple heartbeats, then returns his gaze to me. "And I guess that feeling was right. Don't feel sorry about how you acted towards me. You said it yourself - you were heartbroken. That is *completely* understandable. Know this, Cedarfrost: I will not leave you." He presses his nose up against mine, and even more warmth spreads through me, rippling my fur.

That feeling *was* right. Maybe it was the work of StarClan? Whatever it was, I sure am thankful for it.

Scamp backs away from me and walks toward a hazel bush. I wonder what he is doing, but instead of asking, I watch him. He scans the bush for a moment before his eyes light with satisfaction. He manages to shove a sturdy branch between his neck and his collar. As he walks backwards, the collar is stopped from going further along the branch by another twig that grows out of it. After pulling and shaking his head several times, Scamp finally jolts backwards and regains his balance. He looks at me with an ecstatic expression. What hangs on the hazel bush branch is his blue collar. With neither of us saying a word, I rush up to him and nuzzle his now-bare neck. I even lick his cheek a couple of times.

It seems as if we have both been freed by own things, then. Scamp of his Twolegs' hold over him, and me of my torment about Hawkstrike, though we will still never forget that they are an important part of our pasts and have molded us into who we are now. We are no longer a warrior and a kittypet. We're not even wildcats. We are free felines who have grown to love each other like two doves and are ready to start a new life with each other.

Plus two or three others.

~*~*~*~*~*~

The fifth and final part is finally out! Thank you all so much for reading all of this if you did, as well as Me, or Her?!

***prays that you read Me, or Her? before this one* xP**

But seriously, thank you! It means the world to me for someone - *you* - to read something that I have written. I hope to see some of you in any of my other books I post on here! It would be awesome if you read more of my writing :)

Thank you again for reading! Please *vote, comment, add,* and *share!* Thank you!! .W.

Epilogue + Author's Note

Wait wait... tHERE'S ANOTHER UPDATE?? I THOUGHT THIS STORY WAS OVER! AND IT'S ONLY SUPPOSED TO BE *FIVE* PARTS, NOT sIX!!

I know, but I though an Epilogue was necessary to finally end this story >W< It's short, but cute and meaningful. I'll see you again at the end :3

~*~*~*~*~*~

About 12 moons later...

"Mommy! Daddy! I just saw a fish jump out of the water!" one of my kits, a white she-kit with three small black spots on her back, chirps happily. Her bright blue eyes dazzle with excitement at her discovery as she bounds up to Scamp and I from the edge of the river.

"That's wonderful, Rose!" I comment sweetly. "A couple more moons, and Daddy will teach you how to catch a fish." While Rose's eyes gleamed with even more exhilaration, I glance aside at Scamp and see that his expression holds a sort of dread. I wait for him to explain with my head tilted to the side.

"I just don't want what happened to you happen to her," he murmured in my ear so that Rose wouldn't hear him, though I don't think she would pay us any attention, as she is currently dancing around on the sand with glee.

I give out a sigh. "Scamp, I said a couple more moons. She will be older and stronger, and don't forget, you'll be there right with her. And you saved me, so why can't you save her if she falls in?"

I see in his amber eyes that he is contemplating greatly on what he

should do. Eventually, he gives a nod and a small smile. "Fair enough."

"Ow! I said no claws! You're cheating!"

"Well, that's what you get for biting my tail!"

At the sound of my other kits' voices, I turn around and see my only tom kit, black-furred with white paws, and my other she-kit, a full on mixture of white and black, rolling around in the sand with each other. I quickly duck out of the way of some flying sand. "Hawk, Sky! Knock it off!" I snap at them. They pause what they are doing and scramble up from their tangle with each other.

"She was using claws, though!" Hawk protests, his amber eyes carrying a small flame of fury.

Sky casts an accusing glance toward her brother with her narrowed, green eyes. "I wouldn't have had to use my claws if you didn't bite my tail first!" She brings her fluffy tail around and looks at it. "It's still hurting where you bit it!"

"Enough," I say, looking down at them. "Hawk, no more biting, and Sky, no more claws. It is *play* fighting; I don't want to see any blood. Understood?"

They both nod and reply at the same time, "Understood, Mommy."

Then out of nowhere, Rose comes in from behind me and tackles Sky, which leads to Hawk tackling Rose, and the three kits turn into a bunch of wiggling fur, all laughing and having a good time with each other. Scamp arrives beside me, and our tails subconsciously twine together. As I watch our kits, my heart swells with love for all of them and Scamp.

Yes, I did name Rose and Hawk after Rosebreeze and Hawkstrike. Those two ForestClan lovers have taught me a lot, even in the four days after I left the Clan. They also led me toward Scamp and my future with him. I wonder every now and then what my life would be like in the Clan with Hawkstrike if he did take me as a mate. I also conclude that thought with, *I would not be as happy with him as*

I am with Scamp. If I ever see them again, I will be sure to thank them for doing what they have done, and that it was better for all of us in the end.

Since I named Rose and Hawk - and would have named them that no matter how much Scamp protested, thankfully none - I had figured that he should get to name the third kit. So he suggested Sky, and I love the name. I do not know if it has as much meaning to him as Hawk and Rose do toward me - or any meaning at *all* - but it suits the young she-kit nicely.

So, we are now Cedarfrost and Scamp, parents of three kits - Rose, Hawk, and Sky - and are all happy where we are in life, thanks to Rosebreeze and Hawkstrike.

~*~*~*~*~*~

And this finally concludes Hate, or Love! There is no other parts after this, I promise :)

I really enjoyed writing this short story, though it probably shouldn't have taken as long as it did.... Oh well, you guys know me XD I wanted to make sure that this was as good, or maybe even better than Me, or Her, because for a time, I was worried that this was going to be worse. But I think it pulled through! :D

Before I say goodbye, I want to tell you guys a few little fun facts that have to do with this story:

1) Scamp is actually kind of named after my pet cat. When we first found him in our garage, he would just 'scamper' across it each time we thought we caught him. So I wanted to name him Scamper, or Scamp for short, but then my sister and her friends, who are Fall Out Boy fangirls, named him Pete without my agreeing to .3.

2) Scamp's looks is also half after my cat, and half after a certain YouTuber's cat named Skumper. My cat is black, with some pretty unique gray fur underneath I think, while Skumper is black with a patch of white on his chest. They both

have amber eyes.

3) *Another* fact about Scamp's name is that it is very similar to the same YouTuber above's Internet name, Scump. (His girlfriend named their cat Skumper after him, yes >w<) Which is another reason why I would have liked Pete's name be Scamp, but oh whale. So if there are any mispellings of Scamp's name being Scump, you know why xP

4) Getting away from Scamp now, did any of you notice that Part 5 in *both* Me, or Her and Hate, or Love are titled "A True Lover's Heart"? I honestly didn't come up with that until I started Part 5 in here, but I love the idea! .w.

So, I guess Cedarfrost chose love over hate now! I truly hope all of you enjoyed this story as much as I did - or maybe even more! If you are sad that this is over, it would be very appreciative if you check out some of my other writings on Wattpad. Maybe you'll like something as much as this one, who knows?

Thank you all for reading, and please remember to *Vote, Comment, Add,* and *Share!* :3

#Scampfrost